Statement regarding SBS Managing Director
Michael Ebeid AM

Michael Ebeid AM will step down as Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director after 7.5 years at the helm of Australia's most unique and distinctive national media organisation and the world's most linguistically diverse broadcaster.

Since joining SBS as its Managing Director in June 2011, Ebeid has led the organisation through a period of immense transformation, growth and achievement. He has led organisational strategies and introduced new initiatives which have led to more Australians engaging with SBS than ever before. These strategies ensure the organisation is well-equipped to deliver on the responsibilities of the SBS Charter, with programs and services which are relevant to an increasingly diverse Australian society, in a tough environment for media operators.

On his departure, Ebeid said: “My decision to step down has been one of the most difficult decisions I've made. Serving as the SBS Managing Director has been a real honour and privilege and I depart feeling confident that this is the right time for a new Managing Director to take the organisation forward.

“SBS is the strongest it has been in over 40 years. We are more relevant than ever and we are ready for the future. Considering the struggle of societies globally to integrate diverse communities harmoniously, SBS today performs a critical role in the Australian community. We are the media organisation audiences can come to, on their preferred platform or device, for distinctive programs and different perspectives that create a better shared understanding within our diverse, multicultural society.

“We have been through a lot of change over the past seven years and our successes have only been achievable with the support of the SBS Board of Directors, our SBS Executive team and of course, our dedicated SBS employees. The SBS team is the most passionate and committed that I've worked with in my 30 year career. Our people come to work every day motivated to make an impact and I’ve learned a lot from them during my tenure.

“Importantly, I depart the organisation knowing that we have a very strong and experienced leadership team to help guide SBS forward. The organisation is honoured and humbled that SBS is valued by the communities we were created to serve four decades ago, and whom are at the heart of our organisation and the decisions we make today.”

Chairman of the SBS Board of Directors, Dr Bulent Hass Dellal AO said: “On behalf of the SBS Board of Directors, I thank Michael enormously for his service and dedication to SBS as our longest serving Managing Director.

“Whilst we are very disappointed that Michael is leaving us, there is no doubt that he departs an organisation which is stronger, sustainable and backed by an important and valued purpose to contribute to the ongoing social and economic development of our nation through media services which foster greater understanding and encourage social cohesion.
“In particular, I commend Michael for his focus on negotiating sustainable government funding, whilst also improving commercial revenues, which have secured SBS’s financial capacity to deliver on its Charter. The Board has valued Michael’s attention to extracting value from SBS activities to position the organisation as a distinctive media provider as changes in the media sector continue to present challenges and opportunities.

“Michael had the foresight to recognise early that the SBS Charter and the organisation’s commitment to diverse multicultural communities provided an opportunity for relevant digital evolution and in-depth storytelling on new and emerging platforms; a strategy which continues to serve the organisation well. He has also invested significant time in improving employee engagement which is critical for the organisation’s future success. We certainly would not have been able to achieve such success without the absolute dedication and professionalism of our SBS people and Michael also leaves with a strong and capable leadership team in place. We wish him all the very best in his next endeavours.”

During Ebeid’s service, SBS has arrested its declining television audiences to achieve seven years of continuous growth in reach in a rapidly fragmenting market, with an average of 13 million Australians each month engaging with the network’s channels. SBS today is regularly considered among the most trusted and impartial news sources. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasting is part of mainstream media since the launch of the National Indigenous Television (NITV) as a free-to-air channel in 2012. Migrants to Australia are well-serviced having modernised SBS’s language programs on radio and digital platforms, which are aiding their participation in Australian life with 2.8 million unique visitors coming to SBS language and audio sites each month. SBS’s many Australian-made television programs continue to earn critical acclaim and drive bigger national conversations about the country’s success and challenges.

Under Ebeid, SBS has transformed its content-making and distribution models to leverage its unique capability for diverse storytelling on digital platforms afforded by the SBS Charter and launched two new free-to-air television channels in addition to NITV, in Food Network and SBS VICELAND. Having launched SBS On Demand in late 2011, it has evolved to be a highly-regarded streaming service now with almost five million registered users and the respected SBS News app is engaging more Australians than ever before. Ebeid also secured long-term rights agreements for the FIFA World Cup™ through to 2022, a 10-year deal for the Tour de France and negotiated Australian representation in the Eurovision Song Contest. In addition, innovative distribution and transmission agreements have produced significant efficiencies for SBS, and the organisation has been found by various independent reviews to be lean and efficient.

In 2017, Ebeid was made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to broadcast media and multicultural affairs as an executive, innovator and business leader, and was also named CEO of the Year for 2017 by CEO Magazine.

Ebeid will depart SBS on 1st October 2018 and will make an announcement in coming weeks about his next role.

The SBS Board of Directors will immediately begin a recruitment process to recruit a new SBS Managing Director.

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